

NUTRITION SERVICES DIVISION MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

No. 99-720

TO:	Summer Food Service Program Sponsors	ISSUE DATE: July 1999
FROM:	Summer Food Service Program Unit	
ATTENTION:	Authorized Representatives	
SUBJECT:	Point of Service Meal Counts in the Summer Food Service Program	
REFERENCE:	USDA APB: 99-20	

This Management Bulletin disseminates information from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding acceptable and reliable methods for establishing “point of service” meal count procedures in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

“Point of service” means that point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable meal has been served to an eligible child. **A reimbursable meal** is a meal that contains all of the required components and quantities as specified in the regulation (7 CFR 225.16). **An eligible child is:**

- Any child 18 years of age or younger who participates at an approved open site or an eligible enrolled site; and
- A person over 18 years of age who is enrolled in a school program for persons with disabilities and who participates at an approved open site or an eligible enrolled site.

Sponsors of enrolled SFSP sites must take care to avoid overt identification of needy children.

Sponsors may develop and use any “point of service” meal count method that provides an accurate and reliable count. Some acceptable tools to use in developing “point of service” meal count procedures include tickets, clickers, and tally marks. A monitor must also be positioned at or near where the child receives a complete meal. The monitor must check each meal (for the required components and quantities) as the eligible child receives it.

Some examples of unacceptable meal count procedures are listed below:

- “Backing out” counts, including using a number that is derived from the number of meals, plates, or trays available prior to the meal service and subtracting the number of meals, plates, or trays remaining after the meal service.
- “Precounts” recorded prior to the meal service, such as using the number of children in attendance, the number of tickets distributed, the number of meals available, or an estimate

of the number of children to be claimed based on previous meal counts.

- Meal counts recorded without verifying that the meals contain all of the required components and quantities as specified in regulations.

These methods are unreliable because they may not accurately record the number of eligible children who received a reimbursable meal. If a sponsor is using an unreliable meal count method, the SFSP reviewer must cite the sponsor and require an immediate corrective action. Sponsors who fail to implement accurate and reliable “point of service” meal count methods risk losing valuable reimbursement.

If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Garza, Program Analyst, Summer Food Service Program Unit, at (916) 322-5885, (800) 333-5675 or mgarza@cde.ca.gov.

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